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The Islám Series

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THE Bible in Islám

THE
BIBLE IN ISLAM

BEING

A Study of the Place and Value of the Bible in Islám

BY THE

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'THE TRADITIONS IN ISLAM', 'GOD IN ISLAM',
'MUHAMMAD IN ISLAM'.

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THE BIBLE IN ISLÁM

CHAPTER I

MUḤAMMAD'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE

No one who reads the Qur'án with attention can fail to be struck with its many references to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. No less than one hundred and thirty such references may be traced, and these, together with many similar allusions in the traditions and commentaries of the Qur'án, furnish us with the material for a study of the place and influence of the Bible in Islám.

That Muḥammad was largely influenced by Jewish and Christian teaching can scarcely be doubted. His relations with the Jews and Christians were, at times, of the closest description, and his allusions to them in the Qur'án make it clear that he placed them in a category entirely distinct from the heathen Arabs. They were *par excellence* the 'People of the Book,' and, as the custodians of a divine revelation, were spared the choice of Islám or the sword, which was the only alternative imposed upon the worshippers of idols.

Muḥammad's attitude towards the Jews varied during the course of his career. Soon after his arrival in Madína we find him entering into a defensive alliance with certain Jewish tribes, and he even adopted Jerusalem as his *Qibla*, or place towards which prayer was to be made, in order to conciliate and win the Jews. When these hopes failed, however, and the Children of Israel continued to cling obstinately to their

ancient faith, he denounced them in unmeasured terms, and thereafter his attitude towards them was one of uncompromising hostility. Before this breach came, however, a perusal of the Qur'án makes it evident that Muḥammad was on terms of the closest intimacy with certain Jews. His references to Jewish history, and his long and oft-repeated recitals of the stories of the Patriarchs and their times could only have been learned from members of the Hebrew race. Indeed the Qur'án itself bears witness to the charge that was constantly levelled at him that he was 'taught' these 'stories of the ancients' by certain unnamed people.

If Muḥammad was indebted to the Jews for Biblical accounts of the Patriarchs, he was still more indebted to them for the uncanonical, and often grossly unhistorical stories of the Talmud which figure so largely in the Qur'ánic narratives. The reader must refer to the author's *The Origins of the Qur'án* for a detailed examination of the resemblances between the Talmud and the Qur'án; it must suffice to state here that any unprejudiced study of those resemblances can leave no doubt as to their reason and origin.

Muḥammad's relationships with the Christians of Arabia were, on the whole, characterized by feelings of closer intimacy and friendship than those which subsisted between him and the Jews. At one time those relationships were of such a cordial nature that the Prophet was led to exclaim, 'Thou shalt certainly find those to be nearest in affection to them (the believers) who say "We are Christians". This because some of them are priests and monks, and because they are free from pride.' [1]

Muḥammad's Christian concubine Mary, it is clear from the Qur'án, exercised a commanding influence over him, and was nearly the cause of a permanent estrangement between

[1] Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 85.

the Prophet and his wives. From Mary, therefore, he could have learnt much of the Gospel story and of that Injíl of which he always spake so highly.

Khadíja, the first and favourite wife of the Prophet, was also well acquainted with Christianity, and her cousin Waraqa, we are told by Ibn Hishám, actually became a Christian.

From the commentators of the Qur'án we learn that Muḥammad was in the habit of listening to the reading of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Thus, commenting on the Qur'ánic passage, 'They say, verily a certain man teacheth him (Muḥammad)'; the great Muslim exegete Baiḍáwi says,

يعنون جبرا الرومي غلام عامر ابن الحضرمي و قيل جبرو يسارا كانا يصنعان السيوف بمكة و يقران التوراة والانجيل و كان الرسول صلي الله عليه و سلم يمرّ عليهما و يسمع ما يقرانه

'By the person referred to is meant Jabará, a Greek slave of 'Ámir ibnu'l-Ḥaḍrami. It is also said that Jabará and Yasára, two sword-makers of Mecca, used to read the Taurát and Injíl, and that the Prophet was in the habit of passing by them and listening to what they were reading.' The same story is told both in the *Tafsír-i-Madárak* and in the *Tafsír-i-Jalálain*, so that it is clear that it was the Prophet's habit to thus make himself acquainted with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.

We know, further, that it was the Prophet's habit to question the 'People of the Book' concerning the teaching of their Scriptures. Thus Islám has preserved a Tradition to the effect that,

قال ابن عباس فلما سال النبي صلعم عن شيئي من اهل كتاب فكتموه اياه و اخبروه بغيره فخرجوا قد اروه ان قد خبروه بما سالهم عنه

'Ibn 'Abbás records that when the Prophet asked any question of the "People of the Book", they suppressed the matter, and in place of it told him something else, and went away letting him think that they had told him what he asked.'

Muḥammad probably never himself read the Bible. Indeed some Muslims affirm that he could not read; but this is doubtful. There are not a few well-authenticated instances recorded both in the Traditions and in the standard biographies of the Prophet of his both reading and writing. His knowledge of the Bible, however, was probably gained from hearsay only. He certainly had ample opportunities of thus learning the stories of the Old and New Testaments.

We have already remarked that Muḥammad learned many Talmudic fables from the Jews. These he seems to have looked upon as portions of the canonical Scriptures, for many of them ultimately found a place in the Qur'án itself. In like manner the Prophet of Islám came into contact with many heterodox forms of Christianity in Arabia, from the votaries of whom he learned not a few fanciful stories of the apocryphal writings. In this way many legendary incidents recorded in such unhistorical books as the Coptic *History of the Virgin*, the so-called *Gospel of the Infancy*, *The Gospel of Thomas the Israelite* and others, repeated, no doubt, to the Prophet by his Christian acquaintances, were erroneously accepted by him as portions of the inspired Scriptures, and ultimately found a place in his Qur'án. The reader is referred to the author's *The Origins of the Qur'án* for detailed proofs of this statement; we here simply state the fact in order to show the limitations of Muḥammad's knowledge of the Bible, and to suggest a reasonable explanation of the many historical errors of the Qur'án.

Muḥammad's contact with heretical forms of Christianity was further responsible for his mistaken views of certain Christian doctrines. For example, some of the heretical

sects of Christians inhabiting parts of Arabia in the time of the Prophet had carried the adoration of the Virgin to such lengths that the Prophet mistakenly imagined that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity conceived of a Trinity consisting of Father, Son and Virgin Mary, and this imaginary cult he combats in the following words: 'When God shall say, O Jesus, Son of Mary, hast thou said unto mankind, "Take me and my mother as two Gods, beside God"?'

Whatever may be said, however, as to the accuracy or otherwise of the Prophet's knowledge of the contents of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, there can be no doubt as to his views regarding their origin and value. His many utterances regarding them are full and explicit. Everywhere and always the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are for Muḥammad a divine revelation mediated to men through the agency of God's holy prophets, and, as such, to be revered and honoured. In the following chapter we shall endeavour to ascertain, somewhat in detail, Muḥammad's views regarding those Scriptures, and the attitude which he adopted towards them.

CHAPTER II

MUḤAMMAD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE BIBLE

ONE of the first things which arrests the attention of the careful reader of the Qur'án is the great reverence with which Muḥammad invariably spoke of the Bible. The divine origin of the Taurát, Zabúr and Injíl is again and again acknowledged, and those books are ever spoken of in terms of highest praise. Thus they are variously termed 'The Word of God', 'The Book of God', 'A Guide and a Mercy', 'A Light and Direction to Men', 'The Testimony of God', 'Guidance and Light', and so on. Their inspiration, the Prophet declared, was exactly of the same kind as the inspiration of the Qur'án itself. Thus we read, 'Verily we have revealed to thee as we revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and as we revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon.'[1]

In another passage Muḥammad warns men against making any invidious distinctions between the Qur'án and those Scriptures which preceded it. Thus we read, 'Say ye, we believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and that which hath been given to Moses and to Jesus, and that which was given to the Prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them; and to God are we resigned.'[2]

[1] Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 164. [2] Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 136.

Not only did Muḥammad speak of the Bible in terms of deepest reverence, but he everywhere treated it as trustworthy, and as 'light and guidance' for the people of his own day, no less than for those who had preceded him. Thus he is recorded in the Qur'án as appealing to the Taurát to settle certain controversies regarding food which had arisen between him and the Jews. One such instance is recorded in these words, 'Bring ye then the Taurát and read it, if ye be men of truth.'[1]

On another occasion a discussion arose as to the punishment to be meted out to certain Jews who had been found guilty of adultery. Then, the Tradition proceeds,

فقال لهم رسول الله صلي الله عليه و سلم ما تجدون في التوراة في شان الرجم

'The Apostle of God said to them, "What do you find in the Taurát in the matter of stoning (adulterers)"?' The Taurát was then brought, and Muḥammad gave judgement according to the law laid down in that book.

These incidents throw a flood of light upon the Bible of Muḥammad's day. They show that he, at any rate, knew of no 'corruption', for they reveal him as willing to abide by the arbitrament of the Taurát in his discussions with the Jews. Further, they show that he knew nothing of any doctrine of abrogation; for he recognized the Law of Moses as still binding on his Jewish contemporaries.

The Jewish and Christian Scriptures are again and again referred to in the Qur'án as 'Light' and guidance'. That being so, one is not surprised to find the Prophet advising his followers to seek the advice and teaching of the 'People of the

[1] Súratu' Áli 'Imrán (iii) 94.

Book' when in religious doubt. Such advice is significant, and shows, as no other language could, the estimation in which the Prophet of Islám held the Bible. The passage referred to is as follows: 'None have we sent before thee but men inspired, ask of those who have the Books of Monition, if ye know it not.' [1]

The Jalálain explain the term 'those who have the Books of Monition' as 'the learned men of the Taurát and Injíl'; whilst 'Abbás also says it means 'the People of the Taurát and Injíl'. Further comment is needless.

Muḥammad's estimate of the Bible may also be gathered from the fact that he clearly taught the observance of the Old and New Testaments by the Jews and Christians of his day. Several passages indicating this are to be found in the Qur'án. Thus, for example, in Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 72 we read, 'O People of the Book, ye have no ground to stand on, until ye observe the Taurát and the Injíl and that which hath been sent down to you from your Lord.'

Another passage which clearly demonstrates that the Bible was neither corrupted nor abrogated is the following: 'And in the footsteps of the Prophets caused we Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow, confirming the Taurát which was before him. And we gave him the Injíl with its guidance and light, confirmatory of its preceding Taurát: a guidance and warning to those who fear God; and that the people of the Injíl may judge according to what God hath sent down therein.' Here the Injíl is referred to as a God-given guide, not, be it noted, to be superseded by the Qur'án, but a touchstone by which the Christian contemporaries of Muḥammad were to judge between right and wrong, truth and error. Moreover, those who would not so use the Injíl were denounced as sinners in the sight of God, for the passage

[1] Súratu'n-Naḥl (xvi) 44.

continues thus, 'And whoso will not judge by what God hath sent down—such are the perverse.' [1]

Yet another passage inculcating the observance of the precepts of the Bible is the following, 'And if they (the People of the Book) observe the Taurát and the Injíl and what hath been sent down to them from their Lord, they shall surely have their fill of good things from above them, and from beneath their feet.' [2]

The three passages quoted above leave no room for doubt as to the Prophet's view of the Bible. We find him, not at the beginning of his career, but several years after his flight to Madína, inculcating, in language void of all ambiguity, the observance of the Old and New Testaments by the Jews and Christians of his time. They were to observe them, and to judge by them ; they were grounded on nothing, that is, their whole religious profession was vain and futile, unless they obeyed the divine laws as given by Moses and Jesus ; whilst for those who did obey, the divine approval and blessing are promised. Could language demonstrate more clearly the fact that in the judgement of Muḥammad the Bible extant in his time was neither corrupted nor abrogated.

Muḥammad, it is true, in his discussions with the Jews, often accused them of false exegesis of their Scriptures, of quoting passages out of their context, or of hiding the truth. This the latter still do when arguing with Christians concerning the claims of Jesus the Messiah. A misunderstanding of such passages of the Qur'án has led some modern Muslims to imagine that Muḥammad accused the Jews of wilful corruption of the Taurát. A careful study of such passages, however, will make it abundantly clear that such was not the case. Had the Jews acted as alleged by these Muslims the Prophet could never have used the language we have already

[1] Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 49, 50. [2] *Ibid.*, 69.

quoted. We propose, therefore, in the next chapter, to examine in detail some of the principal passages of the Qur'án which are supposed by some to prove the corruption of the Bible. It will be found in every case that, not corruption of the actual text, but corruption of the meaning, in other words false exegesis, is all that was intended by the Prophet.

CHAPTER III

MODERN CHARGES OF CORRUPTION BASED ON THE QUR'ÁN

THE word usually employed by Muslims to denote corruption of the Scriptures is the Arabic word taḥríf. The late Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán thus defines the word.[1] 'Emam Fakhru'd-Dín Rází says in his commentary that the word taḥríf means to change, to alter, to turn aside anything from its truth. This meaning is of general application; but whenever the term is used in relation to Sacred Scriptures, it is, in common acceptation, understood to imply a wilful corruption of the word of God from its true and original purport and intent.' Corruption, it may be added, is generally spoken of as of two kinds, *taḥríf-i-lafẓi*, or corruption of the actual text, and *taḥríf-i-ma'nawi*, or corruption of the meaning by false exegesis. It is on the application of these two terms that the whole controversy with regard to the alleged corruption of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures turns. Muḥammad himself, together with most of the early commentators of the Qur'án, charged the Jews with *taḥríf-i-ma'nawi* only. They accused them with altering the meaning of their Scriptures by false interpretation, or by suppressing the truth when questioned as to the teaching of the Taurát on certain matters. Many modern Muslims, on the other hand, in their endeavour to justify their rejection of the Bible, affirm that the actual text of the Bible has been deliberately tampered with by both Jews and Christians. They declare that prophecies relating to the

[1] *Mahomedan Commentary of the Holy Bible*, vol. i. p. 64.

coming of Muḥammad have been excised from and many passages which teach the divinity of Christ have been interpolated into the Bible. In order to bolster up this theory, which, as we have previously shown, is totally at variance with the whole tenor of the teaching of the Qur'án with regard to the Bible, these people profess to find certain passages in the former book in which the Jews are charged with actual falsification of the text of their Scriptures. It will now be our task to examine these, and we shall have no difficulty in showing that, in every case, falsification of the meaning only was intended by the Prophet.

One of the verses of the Qur'án most frequently quoted in support of the charge of textual corruption of the Bible reads thus[1]:

يحرفون الكلم عن مواضعه

'They shift the words from their places'. Bukhárí says on this[2]:

يحرفون يزيلون و ليس احد يزيل لفظ كتاب من كتب الله
ولكنهم يحرفونه يتاولونه على غير تاويله

'They shift, that is remove; but there is no one who could remove a single word from any Book of God, but they shift, that is change its meaning.' The Syed himself expresses his mature opinion in these words: 'From the clause which follows them, namely, "they forgot what they were admonished"; it is seen that the meaning is, they changed the meaning and purport of the words; not that they changed the actual words.'

A similar charge of shifting words from their places is made against the Jews.[3] It is there written,

[1] Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 14. [2] *Tafsír*, p. 67. [3] Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 46.

مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَ يَقُولُونَ سَمِعْنَا وَ عَصَيْنَا وَاسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ وَّرَاعِنَا لَيًّا بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَ طَعْنًا فِي الدِّينِ

'Among the Jews are those who displace the words and say, "We have heard, and we have not obeyed. Hear thou, but as one that heareth not; and look at us," perplexing with their tongues, and wounding the faith by their revilings.'

A reference to the standard commentaries of the Qur'an will make it abundantly clear that this verse, like its predecessor, contains no proof whatever of the verbal corruption of the Jewish Scriptures. On the contrary, it is shown that the 'words' spoken of are the words of Muḥammad! For example, the Jalálain, in their famous commentary of the Qur'án, tell us that, in order to ridicule Muḥammad, some of the Jews used to alter certain salutations current among the people. Thus they used to come to the Prophet, and instead of saying السلام عليك 'Peace be on thee,' they used to say, السام عليك 'May disaster overtake thee.' Thus they 'perplexed with their tongues.' Imám Fakhru'd-Dín Rází says further that the Jews used to come to Muḥammad and ask him certain questions, but, after taking leave of him, they used to alter the words he had taught them. With regard to the word *Rá'iná*, 'Abdu'l-Qádir says that,

یہ لفظ یہودیون کي زبان مین بُري بات تهي یا گالي تهي مسلمانون کو دیکهکر یہودي بهی معني بد اپنے دل مین رکهکر حضرت کو کہتے کہ راعنا اسواسطے مسلمان کو حکم هوا کہ لفظ راعنا نکہو

'This word was a bad word in the Jews' language, or was abuse. Seeing the Muslims, the Jews also, keeping the bad

meaning in their minds, used to address the Prophet by the word Rá'iná. For this reason the Muslims were commanded not to use the word Rá'iná.' Husain says :

یہود راعنا کے عین کے زیر کو بڑھاکر راعینا کہتے تھے یعنے اي ھمارے چرواھا یعنے آن حضرت صلي اللہ علیہ و سلم پر گائي بکري چرانے کے ساتھہ طعن اؤر تعیض کرتے تھے

'The Jews lengthening the letter 'ain of the word rá'iná (look on us) pronounced it rá'ína, that is, "O our shepherd." In other words, they addressed the Prophet of God, on whom be peace and the blessing of God, as a shepherd of cattle and goats, taunting and reproaching him.'[1]

It is further said in the commentary just quoted that the meaning is that God addressing Muḥammad said

اي میرے حبیب تیرے دشمن یہود تیري باتین اپنے محل اؤر موقع سے بدل دالتے ہین

'O my beloved, thy enemies the Jews are changing thy words from their places.'

From these remarks of the commentators it is clear that the verse quoted above to prove the corruption of the Bible has no reference whatever to that Book, but alludes to the Jews' practice of twisting the words of Muḥammad ; a striking illustration of the ease with which some ignorant Muslims fall into error regarding the teaching of the Qur'án.

Another passage[2] of the Qur'án is often quoted by the same people.

قَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

[1] *Tafsiru'l-Qádari*, p. 168.

[2] Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 75.

'A party of them heard the word of God, and then, after they had understood it, perverted it, and know that they did.' Qáḍí Baiḍáwí, in commenting on this passage, says that the perverting had reference to matters,

كنعت محمد صلى الله عليه و سلم و اية الرجم او تاويله فيفسرونه بما يشتهون

'such as the description of the Prophet of God, or the verse of stoning or the exegesis thereof. For they were in the habit of interpreting it according to their desires.'

The great Syed Aḥmad [1] also in referring to this passage says: 'The clause, "heard the word of God, and then, after they had understood it, perverted it," shows that the charge was only verbal in reading: not that the written words of the text were changed.'

That this is the real meaning of the passage is obvious from the words of the Prophet himself; for had the Jews altered the actual text of their Scriptures it is inconceivable that he would have appealed to those corrupted Scriptures in order to settle points of controversy between himself and the followers of Moses. The ease with which the Jews could thus mislead and deceive the Muslims can be well understood from the fact recorded by Bukhári that,

روي ابو هريرة قال كان اهل الكتاب يقراون التوراة بالعبرانية و يفسرونها بالعربية لاهل الاسلام

'It is related from Abú Huraira that he said, the "People of the Book" used to read the Taurát in Hebrew, and explain it to the people of Islám in Arabic.' What could be easier,

[1] *Commentary of the Holy Bible.*

under such circumstances, than for the Jews to give a wrong interpretation to the passages quoted.

Another passage[1] of the Qur'án, much quoted by the people referred to, is as follows:—

إن الذين يكتمون ما أنزلنا من البينت والهدى من بعد ما بينه للناس في الكتاب أولئك يلعنهم الله و يلعنهم اللعنون

'Those who conceal aught that we have sent down either of clear proof or of guidance, after what we have so clearly shown to men in the Book, God shall curse them, and they who curse shall curse them.'

The 'concealing' here referred to is taken by some ignorant people to mean that the Jews cut out certain passages from their Scriptures; but a reference to the great commentators of Islám will show that nothing of the kind was intended. Thus Al Rází says in his commentary *Al-Kabír* that,

قال ابن عباس ان جماعة من الانصار سئلوا نفرا من اليهود عما في التوراة من صفته صلى الله عليه و سلم و من الاحكام فكتموا فنزلت الاية

'Ibn 'Abbás said that a band of the Helpers (Anṣár) asked a company of the Jews as to what was in the Taurát concerning the coming of the Prophet, on whom be the peace and blessing of God, and concerning certain commands; but they concealed the matter, and then was sent down this verse.'

[1] Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 154.

The same explanation of the passage is given by the famous biographer of the Prophet, Ibn Hishám.[1] It is there stated that certain people.

سال اليهود عن بعض ما في التوراة فاكتموه اياهم و ابوا ان يخبروهم عنه فانزل الله عز و جل ان الذين يكتمون

'asked the Jews concerning certain things which were in the Taurát, but they hid them, and refused to inform them of the matter. Then the Glorious God sent down the words, "Verily those who conceal",' etc. As a matter of fact this 'concealing' of the truth by the Jews is more than once referred to in the Qur'án, but nowhere does it mean that they cut out or altered the actual words of Scripture. There is a celebrated Tradition preserved in the *Mishkátu'l-Maṣábíḥ* which throws a flood of light upon this matter, and which makes it indisputably clear as to what is meant by 'concealing' the word of God. The Tradition is found in the section entitled *Kitábu'l-Hadúd*, and is as follows: 'From 'Abdu'lláh bin-'Umar it is related that the Jews came to the Prophet of God, on whom be the peace and blessing of God, and informed him that a man and a woman of the Jews had committed adultery. The apostle of God said to them, "What do you find in the Taurát in the matter of stoning" (of adulterers)? They said, "Disgrace them and whip them." 'Abdu'lláh bin Salám replied, "You lie, verily the command to stone them is found in it." Then they brought the Taurát and opened it. But one of the Jews placed his hand over the verse of stoning, and read what preceded and what followed it. But 'Abdu'lláh bin Salám said, "Lift up your hand." Then he raised his hand, and lo! in the Taurát was the verse of stoning. Then they said, "He has spoken truly, O, Muḥammad, in it is the

[1] Ṣiráṭu'r-Rasúl.

verse of stoning." Then the Prophet of God, on whom be the peace and blessing of God, commanded that they should both be stoned, and they were so.'

This Tradition affords an interesting example of the way in which the Jews used to 'conceal' the Word of God; and it incidentally gives the lie to those who say the word proves the corruption of the text of the Bible.

Yet another verse of the Qur'án [1] is sometimes quoted to support the charge of corruption of the Taurát. It runs thus,

يَاأَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَ تَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَ أَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

'O People of the Book, why clothe ye the truth with falsehood? Why wittingly hide the truth?'

The great biographer of the Prophet, Ibn Hishám,[2] has recorded for us the occasion of the 'sending down' of this verse, and, in doing so, has entirely refuted the opinion of those who affirm that it teaches the corruption of the Bible. He writes as follows:

قال عبد الله بن ضعيف و عدي بن زيد والحارث بن عوف بعضهم لبعض تعالوا نومن بما انزل على محمد و اصحابه عدوة و نكفر به عشية حتي نلبس عليهم دينهم لعلهم يصنعون كما نصنع فيرجعون عن دينهم فانزل الله عز و جل فيهم يا اهل الكتاب لم تلبسون الحق بالباطل و تكتمون الحق و انتم تعلمون

''Abdu'lláh bin Ḍa'if, 'Adi bin Zaid and Al-Ḥaritha bin 'Aúf spoke together thus: "Come, let us in the morning believe

[1] Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 71. [2] Ṣirátu'r-Rasúl.

in what has been sent down on Muḥammad and his companions, and let us disbelieve it in the evening in order that we may confuse their religion for them, and that they may act as we act, and turn back from their religion." Then sent down the Glorious God concerning them the words, "O People of the Book, why clothe ye the truth with falsehood? Why wittingly hide the truth"?'

From these words of Ibn Hishám it is clear that the passage under discussion has no reference whatever to the Bible. It refers to certain lying Jews who, in order to lead the Muslims from their faith, pretended in the morning to believe in Muḥammad and the Qur'án, 'hiding' the truth of the matter, and 'clothing' with falsehood their real intentions, but openly disavowing their belief in him in the evening.

Another verse[1] is sometimes quoted to prove the corruption of the Taurát. It is as follows:

وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلْوُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُمْ بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ

'And some truly are there who torture the Scriptures with their tongues, in order that ye may suppose it to be from the Scripture; yet it is not from the Scripture. They say, "It is from God"; yet it is not from God.' One would have thought that a careful reading of this passage would alone have been sufficient to convince the most prejudiced that there is here no charge of changing the written words of the Taurát. The 'torturing' or twisting *with the tongue* obviously refers to verbal alterations made when reading or reciting the Scripture. This is freely admitted by Sir Syed

[1] Súratu Áli 'Imrán (iii) 78.

Aḥmad Khán[1] where he writes: 'This verse shows that the Scripture readers were in the habit of substituting words of their own for those of the text, but it does not show that there was any tampering with the written text itself.'

The famous commentator Ibn 'Abbás in his comment on this passage says:

يقولون على الله الكذب وهم يعلمون انه ليس ذلك في كتابهم

'They speak lies against God; and they know that what they say is not in their Book.'

Ibn 'Abbás makes it clear that certain Jews were in the habit of falsely adding to their reading of the Taurát certain words or phrases which were not in the Book which lay open before them. He thus makes it clear that whatever alteration took place was made in the verbal repetition of the Scripture, and not in the written text itself.

The Jalálain also state the same in their comment on the passage. Their words are,

يعطفونها بقرأته عن المنزل

'They change it from its place in reading.'

It may be well to quote here the views of the learned author of the *Tafsír-i-Durr-i-Manthúr* before we pass on to a consideration of the next passage. He writes thus:

و اخرج ابن المنذر و ابن ابي حاتم عن وهب ابن منبه قال ان التوراة والانجيل كما انزلهما الله لم يغير منهما حرف ولكنهم يضلون بالتحريف والتاويل والكتب كانوا يكتبونها من عند انفسهم و يقولون هو من عند الله وما هو من عند الله فاما كتب الله فانها محفوظة لا تحول

[1] *Commentary of the Holy Bible*, p. 72.

'It is related by Ibnu'l-Mandhar and Ibn Abí Ḥátim from Waḥab Ibn Mumba that not a letter has been altered of the Taurát and Injíl from that which was sent down by God, but they (the Jews) used to lead people astray by changing and altering the meaning. They used also to write books from themselves and then say, "It is from God" when they were not from God. But the (real) Books of God were protected from change, and had not been altered.'

From the remarks of leading Muslim commentators quoted above it is abundantly clear that the Qur'án makes no charge of taḥrif-i-lafẓi. All that is proved is that some Jews of Arabia took advantage of the ignorance of their Muslim hearers to mislead them as to the true import of certain passages of their Scriptures. Those Scriptures were written in Hebrew, and had to be translated into Arabic for the comprehension of the Muslims. Thus every opportunity existed for the verbal corruption or false interpretation of Biblical passages. We have already had a concrete illustration of this in the endeavour of certain Jews to protect two of their number from capital punishment by stoning, by pretending that the Mosaic punishment for adultery was merely scourging. No charge, however, was ever made that the Jews deleted the verse of stoning from the Taurát. Indeed it is there to the present day: a mute witness to the faithfulness with which the Jews have preserved their Scriptures.

Yet one or two more passages must be noticed before we pass on to other matters. A passage of the Qur'án sometimes quoted to prove the corruption of the Bible is the following[1]:

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

'And clothe not the truth with falsehood, and hide not the truth when ye know it.'

[1] Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 42.

Commenting on this verse Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán [1] says:

'We are taught by the commentary of Emam Fakhru'-d-Dín Rází that this verse was thus explained: In the Old and New Testaments the predictions referring to the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad are of veiled meaning, and not to be understood without the exercise of profound thought and judgment, and by the help of explanation. Now the Jews were always denying the rightful interpretation of these prophecies, and busied themselves in captious and unprofitable disputations, and in striving by overstrained arguments and illogical reasoning to explain away their true meaning. It was then that this ayat was sent down from heaven enjoining them not to adulterate truth with falsehood, so as to mislead people by the doubts they cast upon the true sense of the disputed passages of Scripture. This extract demonstrates the fact which is sought to be established that putting a *false meaning to words* is all that is charged against the Jews; and not that they were guilty of mutilating the written text.'

The following comment from Al-Rází's famous commentary *Al-Kabír* will indicate the general view of that scholar with regard to this important subject. He writes as follows:

عن ابن عباس انهم كانوا يحرفون ظاهر التورية والانجيل و عند المتكلمين هذا ممتنع لانهما كانا كتابين بلغا في الشهرة والتواتر الي حيث يتعذر ذالك فيهما بل كانوا يكتمون التاويل

'It is related from Ibn 'Abbás that they were altering the text of the Taurát and Injíl, but in the opinion of scholars this was impossible, because those Scriptures were generally known and widely circulated, having been handed down from generation to generation, so that such (alteration) in them was impossible; rather they were hiding the meaning.'

[1] *Commentary of the Holy Bible*, p. 86.

From what has been written above it has been clearly proved that no charge of wilfully corrupting the actual text of the Bible was ever made in the Qur'án against the Jews. The only charge made was that of altering the meaning by false exegesis, or of hiding the truth by the concealment of certain passages. With regard to the Christians, there is not a single passage in the whole Qur'án which charges the followers of Jesus even with taḥrif-i-ma'nawi. This is a point that is sometimes lost sight of, and one to which we here call the attention of the Muslim reader; for even if it could be shown that certain Jews of Madína had altered their copies of the Taurát—a thing impossible of proof, as we have shown—yet who would judge it possible that all the Jews of the whole world had collaborated together to make the same alterations in their copies! Such a presumption supposes incredible credulity on the part of those who suggest it. Moreover, assuming that the Jews did excise from their copies of the Taurát certain prophecies concerning the coming of Muḥammad, how is it that those prophecies are not found in the copies held by the Christians? It is well known that there has always existed the bitterest enmity between Jews and Christians, so that collusion between them in such a matter as the corruption of the Scriptures was absolutely impossible. The inference is clear: no such corruption has ever taken place.

CHAPTER IV

MODERN CHARGES OF CORRUPTION BASED ON THE BIBLE

THOSE Muslims who profess to believe that the Bible has been corrupted by Jews and Christians not only go to the Qur'án for their so-called proofs, but they further busy themselves in trying to cull from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures illustrations to prove their charges. It is our purpose in this chapter to deal with some of these, and to show that such a method of attack involves the use of a two-edged weapon, which is as likely to injure the user as the one attacked.

It is obviously impossible, in the limits of one small volume, to deal *seratim* with all the passages of the Bible which have been quoted by various Muslim writers in order to prove their pet theme; we propose, rather, to examine a few specimen passages illustrative of the various methods which have been employed in attacking the integrity of the Bible; and it will not be difficult to show that, if exactly the same principles be applied to the Qur'án, the latter book would likewise have to be abandoned by all honest Muslims.

One of the favourite methods of those who imagine that the Bible has been deliberately corrupted by Jews and Christians is to quote the various readings to be found in the ancient manuscripts of the Bible, or to compare the Authorized and Revised Versions of the English Bible, and then, with a shout of triumph, declare their contention proven. It is necessary here to once again call the reader's attention to Sir Syed Aḥmad's definition of the word *taḥrîf* as a 'wilful corruption of the

word of God from its true and original purport and intent.' Now it is obvious that a 'wilful' corruption of any word or sentence of Scripture must be done with a purpose. It is impossible to imagine men changing a word here or a word there in the scripture narrative just for the sake of changing; yet very many of the words pointed out by Muslim critics of the Bible as existing in various readings are just words of this class. They may have been copyists' errors, or they may have been explanatory glosses which inadvertently crept into the text; but whatever they were, there is nothing in them to suggest deliberate falsification. These so-called 'corruptions' make no difference whatever to a single doctrine of the Bible, and in most cases no possible object can be conceived for which they would have been made.

If the Bible is to be rejected because of the presence of such various readings, then the Qur'án must be rejected for precisely similar reasons; for the Qur'án itself contains hundreds of similar various readings. The reader should refer to the author's *The Qur'án in Islám* for a detailed description of the compilation and subsequent recension of the Qur'án; suffice it to state here that, after its compilation by the orders of the Khalífa Abú Bakr, a great number of errors rapidly crept into the reading and recitation of that book, until the Khalífa 'Uthmán was forced to the drastic expedient of writing out one copy of the Qur'án and then burning all the rest! The absence of vowel points, however, continued to be a fruitful source of trouble, and soon led again to endless diversity in the reading and interpretation of the Qur'án. Jalálu'd-Dín As-Syúṭi tells us that five copies were made of 'Uthmán's recension and sent to the cities of Mecca, Madína, Damascus, Baṣra, and Kúfa, where, some time in the second century of the Hijra, seven noted 'Readers' acquired recognition for seven differing ways of reading the Qur'án. Each of these readers, again, is known by two 'Reporters'. The

names of these Readers are Náfi of Madína, Ibn Kathír of Mecca, Abú 'Amr of Baṣra, Ibn 'Amr of Damascus, 'Aṣim of Kúfa, Ḥamza of Kúfa, and Al-Kisá'í of Kúfa.

Many books containing collections of the various readings of the Qur'án have been compiled by Muslim scholars. The most famous is the Taidír of Al-Dá'na. This scholar not only mentions the various readings of the different 'Readers' referred to above, but also gives the names of the readers through whom each of the seven obtained his information. Al-Rází in his commentary gives the critical reasons that may be urged in favour of or against the different readings. It will be seen, therefore, that the Qur'án, equally with all other ancient books, contains various readings; and all who have studied that book critically with the help of the standard commentaries know perfectly well that the number of such various readings runs into many hundreds. By way of illustration we here propose to give the various readings quoted by Muslim exegetes as occurring in the eight verses of Súratu'l-Fátiḥa, the opening chapter of the Qur'án, after which, we trust, we shall hear no more from Muslim controversialists of the various readings of the Bible.

From the famous *Tafsíru'l-Baiḍáwí* we learn that the reading مالك يوم الدين in verse 3 'is the reading of 'Aṣim and Al-Kisá'í and Ya'qúb . . . whilst the other readers have ملك and the latter is preferable as being the reading of the people of Mecca and Madína.' The reader will not fail to note that, in spite of Baiḍáwí's assertion that the reading ملك is to be preferred, yet the current copies of the Qur'án have the other reading مالك. This various reading is also mentioned by the Jalálain.

In the very next sentence of the Qur'án to the one commented on above we have another various reading pointed out by Baiḍáwí who writes:

قرئ اياك بفتح الهمزة

'Some read the letter hamza with a *fatha* instead of a *kesra*.'

Then, again, the Imám tells us, some read the two *nuns* in this passage with a *kesra* instead of a *fatha*; whilst in verse 6 he points out a startling variation from the received text. The Imám writes thus:

قرئ صراط من انعمت عليهم

'Some read *ṣiráṭ man an'amta alaihim*' in place of the words found in current copies of the Qur'án '*ṣiráṭ alladhína an'amta alaihim.*' It would puzzle the great Imám, let alone the Muslim reader of this little book, to tell us which of these readings represents the original words spoken by Muḥammad. There is even considerable doubt whether the Prophet spoke either, for one of the greatest of the 'Companions,' himself an eminent reader of the Qur'án, Ibn Mas'úd, discarded this whole chapter as not being a part of the Qur'án at all!

Jalálu'd-Dín has preserved this interesting piece of information,[1] for he tells us that

قال ابن حجر في شرح البخاري قد صح عن ابن مسعود انكار ذلك فاخرج الحمد

'Ibn Ḥajar has said in *Sharaḥu'l-Bukhárí* that Ibn Mas'úd denied that, and cast out *Al Ḥamd* (i.e. Súratu'l-Fátiḥa, from his Qur'án).'

Baiḍáwí mentions still another reading in the eighth verse of this chapter, for he tells us that in place of the words لا الضالين *lá aḍḍálína*, some read غير الضالين *ghair aḍḍálína*; whilst still another reading of the same word mentioned by him is that with hamza, namely, لا اضألين.

[1] *Itqán*, p. 84.

It is admitted that none of the various readings referred to above makes any serious difference to the meaning of the passage. But that is not the point here. The point is that the Qur'án is just as open to criticism on the ground of the presence of various readings as is the Bible. Moreover, it would not be difficult to quote very many various readings in later chapters of the Qur'án which do seriously alter the meaning. Some of these are quoted in the book *The Qur'án in Islám* referred to above. Despite these facts, there are still not wanting educated Muslims who continue to attack the Bible and impugn its trustworthiness because of the various readings to be found in various ancient manuscripts. Could insincerity and inconsistency go further!

If the Bible and the Qur'án be compared with respect to this matter of various readings, it will readily be seen that the advantage lies altogether with the Bible. We have already referred to the drastic expedient of the Khalífa 'Uthmán for eliminating the various readings of the Qur'án by retaining one copy and burning all the rest. Muslims are, therefore, necessarily shut up to this one text, though, as we have already shown, that text is open to the gravest suspicion. Under these circumstances it is impossible for Muslim scholars to compare the various ancient manuscripts of the Qur'án, and so determine the correct text. With Christians, however, the case is entirely different; for they have carefully preserved with jealous care all ancient manuscripts of the Bible, and are, therefore, able to compare them, and by a process of elimination, determine with a great degree of accuracy, what was the original text. The reader will be better able to follow the argument by comparing the imaginary readings of eight different and differing manuscripts given below. The differences are purposely exaggerated for the purpose of illustration. A careful comparison of the different texts will show that the first is almost certainly the correct one. Such a process

would be impossible in the case of the Qur'án, where Muslims are for ever shut up to one arbitrary text, with no means of testing its correctness. With a hundred texts to collate, the result would be still more certain.

1. Jesus went down to Capernaum, and entered a synagogue of the Jews.
2. Jesus went up to Capernaum, and entered a synagogue of the Jews.
3. Jesus went down to Capernaum, and entered a temple of the Jews.
4. Jesus went to Capernaum, and entered a synagogue of the Jews.
5. Jesus, therefore, went down to Capernaum, and entered a synagogue of the Jews.
6. Jesus went down to Capernaum, and entered a synagogue of the Samaritans.
7. Jesus went down to Nazareth, and entered a synagogue of the Jews.
8. Jesus and His disciples went down to Capernaum, and entered a synagogue of the Jews.

Another class of Scripture frequently quoted by some Muslims to prove the corruption of the Bible is that class of passage which has reference to the sins of the Prophets. Thus in a scurrilous book published in the Bengali language and called *Raddi Christian* a whole chapter is devoted to what the author calls 'abuse of the Saints of God'. He (and others like him) starts off with the baseless assumption, which has not the slightest foundation in the Qur'án, that all Prophets are sinless; consequently every passage of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures in which the sins of the Prophets are mentioned must be necessarily false; and therefore the Bible is corrupted. Such is the logic and such the arrogance of some Muslim controversialists!

The author of the book *Raddi Christian* mentioned above is not alone in the possession of this unique power of reasoning. A so-called 'Maulána,' writing in the Bengali magazine *Naba Núr* for the month of Jaiystha, 1327 A.H., after

fulminating against the Bible, quotes a number of Biblical passages in which the sins of Lot, Jacob, Aaron, David, Solomon and others are mentioned, and then with no little semblance of indignation asks whether such passages can possibly be portions of the real Taurát and Injíl; for, he proceeds, 'According to the Qur'án it is proved that the verses referred to are false and corrupted.'

Unfortunately for these persons and their logic the Qur'án itself contains exactly similar teaching, and the sins of not a few of the Prophets are clearly mentioned therein! This being so, it is difficult to see how, on their reasoning, Muslims can reject the Bible, and yet retain the Qur'án. If the Bible goes because of its alleged unworthy representations of the Holy Prophets, surely the Qur'án must be rejected for exactly similar reasons.

It may be well, before moving on to our next point, to quote a few of the verses of the Qur'án in which the sins of the Prophets and their repentance and prayers for pardon are clearly mentioned; after which, it is hoped, we shall hear less of this 'proof' of the corruption of the Bible.

Of Abraham we read in the Qur'án that he said, when speaking of God,

وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

'Who, I hope, will forgive me my sins in the day of reckoning.'[1] Some of the sins referred to, such as falsehood, are clearly mentioned in other places of the Qur'án and in the Traditions.

Of Moses it is written in the Qur'án that he killed an Egyptian,

[1] Súratu'sh-Shu'ará (xxvi) 82.

فوكزه موسى فقضى عليه قال هذا من عمل الشيطن إنه عدو مضل مبين قال رب إني ظلمت نفسي فاغفرلي

'And Moses smote him with his fist and slew him. Said he, "This is a work of Satan; for he is an enemy, a manifest misleader." He said, "O my Lord, I have sinned to mine own hurt; forgive me".'[1]

David's sin of adultery is referred to in Súratu Ṣád (xxxviii) and in v. 24 his repentance and prayer for pardon is recorded as follows:

فاستغفر ربه و خر راكعا و أناب

'So he asked pardon of his Lord, and fell down and bowed himself and repented.'

In the same chapter Solomon is described as a sinner, and his prayer for pardon is recorded in these words:

فقال إني أحببت حب الخير عن ذكر ربي ... ثم أناب قال رب اغفرلي

'And he said, "Truly I have loved the love of earthly goods above the remembrance of my Lord" . . . Afterwards he returned (to us) in penitence. He said, "O my Lord, pardon me".'

The illustrations given above are sufficient to prove that the Qur'án, equally with the Bible, depicts the Prophets as weak and erring men, who repeatedly asked pardon for their sins. Yet because the Bible contains such teaching it is

[1] Súratu'l-Qaṣaṣ (xxviii) 15, 16.

derided as 'corrupted' and unworthy of acceptance. Surely, in view of what we have written above, it is time such writing ceased. If this is the best Muslim controversialists have to offer, it makes a sorry exhibition, not only of inconsistency, but of utter insincerity; for the men who write thus must know perfectly well that the Qur'án is open to precisely the same charges. The fact is, the ancient Prophets were men of like passions with ourselves, and the Bible has faithfully recorded both their successes and failures, their virtues and their vices.

Another method adopted by some Muslim controversialists in order to disparage the Bible and throw doubt on its integrity is to select various passages of the Bible relating to the same event, and then pretend to discover 'contradictions' in the different narratives. The fourfold Gospel narrative of the life of Christ affords a happy hunting-ground for such men, who spare no pains to show, with much pretended indignation, that the various verbal disagreements manifest prove the corruption of the Bible. Now when these so-called 'contradictions' are carefully examined it will be generally found that the difficulty is no difficulty at all, but is entirely due to the crass ignorance of the objector. Moreover, as we shall show in these pages, exactly the same kind of difficulty may be met with over and over again in the pages of the Qur'án.

As an instance of the kind of thing referred to we might mention an article which appeared in the *Muslim Review*, a Muḥammadan, or rather Qádiáni, journal published at Woking, England. The writer of the article in question based his attack on the variations in the Gospel narratives of the inscription which was placed over the cross on which Jesus was crucified. As is well known, there exists a verbal disagreement in the records of the Evangelists. Thus St. Matthew tells us that the accusation was written, 'This is

Jesus, the King of the Jews,' whilst St. Mark quotes more briefly, 'The King of the Jews.' St. Luke writes, 'This is the King of the Jews,' whilst in St. John's Gospel the words are given as 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews'.

Now if we apply Sir Syed Ahmad's definition of taḥrif to these passages, we shall at once see how impossible it is to believe that the differences pointed out were deliberately made. In other words, according to the great founder of Aligarh College, the passages in question afford no illustration of taḥrif at all. On the other hand, any honest attempt to understand these passages will make it indubitably clear that the writers were simply quoting the substance of what was written, and not the exact words. Moreover, we are told by St. John that the inscription was written in Hebrew and Latin and Greek, and it is not impossible that such verbal variations existed in the original writings. However, the explanation given above is ample for any fair-minded man; and those who would find in such verbal disagreements a reason for distrusting the Bible, would do well to remember that the Qur'án is full of examples of exactly the same kind of verbal disagreement. Therefore, if such men are consistent, they must reject the Qur'án, no less than the Bible.

Another passage often quoted by Muslims to prove the corruption of the Bible is St. Matthew, xxvii. 9. It is there written: 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field as the Lord appointed me.'

It is pointed out by the critics that the words here attributed to Jeremy the Prophet are not to be found in the Book called by his name, but in the Book of Zechariah. Even there there is no verbal agreement with the words quoted by Matthew, and so, argue these clever gentlemen, the Bible is

corrupted. Now if the reader will bear in mind what was written above regarding the fourfold quotation of the inscription on the cross, he will be prepared to see that Matthew, here, is only giving the substance of the prophecy, and is making no attempt to quote it literally.

The Book of Jeremiah, it is well known, was placed first in the Jewish collection of the Prophetical books of the Hebrew Bible, and, for that reason, often gave its name to the whole collection; just as in common speech the word Taurát, because of its position at the beginning of the Old Testament, is often applied to the whole of that book, though, strictly speaking, the title only belongs to the Books of Moses. For confirmation of this the reader is referred to Sir Syed Ahmad's book,[1] in which he writes: 'Although the term Taurát is strictly applied to the Books of Moses, yet, in the use of Muslims the term sometimes signifies the Book of Moses, and sometimes it is used for all the Books of the Old Testament.'

Now he might well quote a passage from any of the Prophets as being 'written in the Taurát,' yet who would convict him of error? Similarly, when Matthew uses the term Jeremy for the whole collection of the Prophetical Books of the Old Testament, it is futile to contend that he did not know what he was writing about, or that later persons 'corrupted' the words originally written by him. The passage before us affords an excellent illustration of the danger of criticising without full knowledge.

We now give two or three illustrations, out of scores which might be quoted, to show that the Qur'án contains exactly the same kind of verbal disagreement taken objection to by some Muslim critics of the Holy Bible.

[1] *Commentary of the Holy Bible*, vol. ii, p. 32.

In the tenth verse of Súratu Ṭá Há (xx) we are told that when Moses saw the burning bush in the wilderness, he addressed his people in certain words. Again in Súratu'n-Naml, verse 7, the same incident is recorded including Moses' speech to his people; but we find striking 'discrepancies' in the two accounts. We give them side by side, so that the reader can see for himself how wide those 'discrepancies' are.

SURATU ṬA HA	SURATU'N-NAML
'Hath the history of Moses reached thee? When he saw a fire, and said to his family, "Tarry ye (here) for I have perceived a fire: haply I may bring you a brand from it, or find at the fire a guide".'	'When Moses said to his family, "I have perceived a fire; I will bring you tidings from it, or will bring you a blazing brand, that ye may warm you".'

Then the narrative continues in both chapters with a record of the words of God addressed to Moses when the latter approached the fire. We give the two passages in parallel columns, so that the reader may clearly appreciate the verbal disagreements which exist between them.

SURATU ṬA HA	SURATU'N-NAML
'And when he came to it, he was called to, "O Moses! verily I am thy Lord; therefore pull off thy shoes, for thou art in the holy valley of Towa".'	'And when he came to it, he was called to, "O Moses, verily I am God, the mighty, the wise. Throw down now thy staff".'

The whole colloquy between God and Moses is too long for quotation in full here, but the opening sentences which we have quoted are sufficient for our purpose. So long as such verbal disagreements exist in the Qur'án, it is both inconsistent and foolish for Muslims to quote the various accounts of the resurrection of Christ as found in the four

Gospels, and try to prove from their verbal disagreements that the Gospels have been 'corrupted'.

It may be of interest to note the reply of Moses as recorded in various places in the Qur'án. We give below two varying accounts.[1]

SURATU ṬA HA

'He (Moses) said, "O my Lord! enlarge my breast for me, and make my work easy for me, and loose the knot of my tongue that they may understand my speech, and give me a counsellor from among my family, Aaron my brother. By him gird up my loins, and make him a colleague in my work, that we may praise thee often and often remember thee. For thou regardest us".'

SURATU'SH-SHU'ARA

'He (Moses) said, "My Lord, in sooth I fear lest they treat me as a liar; and my breast is straitened, and I am slow of speech. Send, therefore, to Aaron. For they have a charge against me, and I fear lest they put me to death".'

It will be noticed that in Súratu Ṭá Ḥá Moses is represented as begging for Aaron to be sent *with* him as a helper; whilst in Súratu'sh-Shu'ará he seeks to have Aaron sent *instead* of him, as he feared capital punishment for the murder which the Qur'án, in another place, has recorded against him. Here we have, not merely the same story told in different words, but we have an entirely different story, differing materially as to questions of fact. What have the Muslim critics of the Bible got to say to this?

Another illustration of verbal disagreement in the Qur'ánic narratives may be found in the words of God said to have been addressed to our first parents in the Garden of Eden. We give below three distinct, and differing, records from three different chapters of the Qur'án dealing with this one

[1] Súratu Ṭá Ḥá (xx) and Súratu'sh-Shu'ará (xxvi).

speech of God, and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions.

SURATU'L-BAQARA (II.)	SURATU'L-A'RAF (VII.)	SURATU ṬA HA (XX.)
'And we said, "Get ye down, the one of you an enemy to the other; and there shall be for you in the earth a dwelling-place and a provision for a season. . . . Get ye down from it all together, and if guidance shall come to you from me, whoso shall follow my guidance, on them shall come no fear, neither shall they be grieved. But they who shall not believe, and treat our signs as falsehoods, these shall be inmates of the fire: in it shall they remain for ever".'	'He said, "Get ye down, the one of you an enemy to the other; and there shall be for you in the earth a dwelling-place and a provision for a season." He said, "On it shall ye live, and on it shall ye die, and from it shall ye be taken forth".'	'He said, "Get ye all down hence, the one of you an enemy to the other. And if guidance shall come to you from me, whoso shall follow my guidance shall not err, and shall not be wretched; but whoso turneth away from my monition, his truly shall be a life of misery; and we will assemble him (with others) on the day of resurrection, blind".'

We could quote scores of illustrations from the Qur'án similar to those given above, to show that that book contains precisely the same kind of verbal disagreement as that so loudly denounced in the Bible. When it is remembered that the men loudest in these denunciations are men who pretend to some measure of education, and who must know perfectly well that the Qur'án is full of such verbal disagreements and discrepancies, the hypocrisy of the whole proceeding becomes self-evident. If these men are sincere in their opinions, then let them, at least, be consistent, and reject the Qur'án

as well as the Bible. For ourselves, we are not concerned to explain the many apparent contradictions of the Qur'án, but so far as verbal discrepancies occur in the Bible they give us no cause for disbelief. The narrative of one Evangelist often supplements that of another, often amplifies the brief recital of a predecessor or makes clear the ambiguities to which such brevity sometimes leads; but this is not taḥrif, and it in no way affects the general trustworthiness of the Gospel record. More often than not, the substance, and not the actual words, of prophecies of the Old Testament, or of speeches of the New, is all that is quoted by the Gospel writers. To say that the Bible is 'corrupted', because of the absence of literal verbal agreement in such cases, and yet to accept the Qur'án as it stands, is to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

Ignorance of the Bible and of Jewish customs is often responsible for hasty charges of 'corruption' made against that book. Thus the author of the book *Raddi Christian*, mentioned above, (and of course his many copyists) quotes St. Mark ii. 26 to the effect that David entered the house of God and ate the shewbread 'in the time of Abiathar the High-priest'. This is wrong, say the critics, because we learn from 1 Samuel xxi. that Ahimelech was then High-priest.

Now this objection, like many others of the class of writer referred to, is based upon a false assumption, namely that there could only be one Jewish High-priest at the same time. A reference to the Gospel of Luke, however, would have taught them that there were sometimes two High-priests. The words of the Gospel are, 'In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Cæsar . . . Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John.' Similarly, a further reference to 1 Samuel xxiii. 6–9 would have shown them that Abiathar, as stated by St. Mark, was

also a High-priest at the time referred to. Thus we read, 'And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring hither the ephod".' This Abiathar was High-priest until David's death, when the latter's son, Solomon, deposed him for his misdeeds. Thus we read, 'And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, "Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields, for thou art worthy of death; but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted." So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord, that he might fulfil the word of the Lord which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.'[1]

In the book *Raddi Christian* another 'corruption' of the Bible is thus proved. In St. Matthew's Gospel it is said that Jesus, 'walking by the sea of Galilee,' called his first disciples, and said, 'Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men,'[2] whereas in St. Luke's Gospel it is said that this call took place on the shores of the 'Lake of Genesareth'. This constitutes one of the famous 'contradictions' of the Bible, so eagerly seized upon by the writer.

That men of such colossal ignorance should sit down to criticize the Bible almost passes belief; for every schoolboy knows that the body of water in question was respectively called the Sea of Galilee, the Sea of Tiberias and the Sea, or Lake, of Genesareth. Even in the Qur'án the chief city of Arabia is in one place called Bakka and in another Makka, but who would condemn the Qur'án on that account?

Yet another passage of the Bible[3] excites the derision of these intellectuals. It is there written, 'At that time Jesus

[1] I Kings ii. 26–7. [2] Chapter iv. 18–22.

[3] St. Matthew xii. 1.

went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat.' This innocent-looking passage affords a basis for charges of trespass and theft committed with the knowledge and consent of Jesus, and as such a presumption conflicts with the Muslim theory of the sinlessness of the Prophets, the passage is forthwith pronounced an interpolation.

This objection, again, is due solely to the ignorance of the objector, for a reference to the Law of Moses makes it perfectly clear that in thus plucking the ears of corn the disciples of Jesus were acting in strict conformity with that law and the well-established custom of the Jews based upon it. This will be seen from the following quotation from the Taurát: 'When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.' [1]

Strangely enough this teaching of the Bible, which is so strongly objected to by ignorant Muslims, is matched by exactly similar teaching in Islám itself! Thus we find Muḥammad, when asked for a ruling with regard to fruit hanging on the trees, replying as follows:

مَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْهُ مِنْ ذِي حَاجَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَّخِذٍ خُبْنَةً فَلَا شَيْءَ عَلَيْهِ
وَمَنْ خَرَجَ بِشَيْءٍ فَعَلَيْهِ غَرَامَةُ مِثْلَيْهِ وَالْعُقُوبَةُ

'He who approaches it out of need (that is, hunger) without taking away what he can carry, is free from blame; but he

[1] Deuteronomy xxiii. 25.

who takes away some of it is under obligation to pay double its price, and is liable to punishment.'[1]

In the same way the Prophet allowed any one to milk a cow, the property of another, in order to quench his thirst; but he forbade carrying away the milk under such circumstances. Thus it is seen that the very procedure so strongly objected to by some Muslims is allowed both by the Law of Moses and by Muḥammad himself. Further comment is needless.

The ignorance of the Muslim critics referred to is seen in nothing more clearly than in their attempts to criticise the genealogies of Jesus Christ as given in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. We have no space here to deal with these in detail, but as an illustration of their ignorance of ancient Jewish customs we quote one of the many 'discrepancies' discovered by them in their reading of those genealogies.

In St. Matthew i. 16 it is stated that the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, was named Jacob, whilst in St. Luke iii. 22 it is stated that the father of Joseph was named Heli. There are other differences in the two lists of names which suggest that one was giving the legal and the other the natural line of descent. To make our point clear it is necessary to remind the reader of the Jewish law by which, if a man died childless, his brother was required to marry his widow and raise up seed to him in order to maintain the succession. The seed thus raised up would, in the eyes of the law, be counted as the sons of the deceased, though, in the line of natural descent, they would, of course, be counted as the sons of their real father, the deceased's brother. The law referred to is laid down in the Taurát thus, 'If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without

[1] *Mishkátu'l-Maṣábiḥ, Kitábu'l-Buyu'a.*

unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be that the first-born which she beareth shalls ucceed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.' [1] Now if Heli died childless, and Jacob, his brother, or half-brother, married Heli's widow in accordance with the law laid down by Moses, then the offspring, Joseph, would be the legal son of Heli, but the natural son of Jacob; so that what, at first sight, appears a serious discrepancy, would be no discrepancy at all.

In this connexion we would advise the critics to turn their attention to their own Qur'án, where they will find Abraham described as the father of both Isaac and Jacob, though it is well known that Jacob was the son of Isaac. In the passage referred to [2] we read, 'And we gave him (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob.' To show that we have not mis-read the passage, we give here the comment of a Muslim exegete, Muḥammad Naimu'd-Dín, who on p. 115 of his Qur'án commentary says, 'That is, God is saying, O Muḥammad, I gave Abraham two sons, Isaac and Jacob, and I guided them both.'

The fact is that all attempts to prove the deliberate falsification of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, whether from the Qur'án or from the Bible itself, are bound to fail. As to various readings and verbal discrepancies, they are matched by exactly similar conditions in the Qur'án itself, and do not affect the general trustworthiness of the whole. If our Muslim brethren would spend as much time in studying the testimony of their Prophet to the integrity and trustworthiness of the Bible as they spend in trying to prove its corruption, very different results would follow.

[1] Deuteronomy xxv. 5–6. [2] Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 84.

CHAPTER V

MODERN CHARGES OF ABROGATION

WE have shown in a previous chapter that Muḥammad not only acknowledged the Bible to be the uncorrupted word of God, but he also urged upon the Jews and Christians of his day the duty of obeying its precepts. He himself, we have seen, decided certain controversies concerning food and the punishment of adulterers by a reference to the Taurát, thus affording clear and convincing proof that no abrogation of the Jewish Scriptures had taken place as a result of his preaching of the Qur'án. Yet, despite these facts, there are not wanting Muslims who, despairing of proving the corruption of the Bible, strive to justify their rejection of its teachings by urging that it has been abrogated. When pressed for reasons for this extraordinary repudiation of the teaching of their Prophet, they refer us to three verses of the Qur'án which, they allege, prove that the Bible has been abrogated by the latter book.

It will now be our duty to examine these passages in the light thrown upon them by the standard Muḥammadan commentators of the Qur'án; and we shall have no difficulty in showing that this charge, like that of 'corruption', is without the slightest foundation.

The first of the three passages which are supposed to teach the abrogation of the Bible by the Qur'án is Súratu'n-Naḥl (xvi) 101, where we read, 'And when we change one verse for another, and God knoweth best what He revealeth, they say, "Thou art only a fabricator". Nay, but most of them

have no knowledge.' A reference to the standard commentaries of the Qur'án will show that this passage has no reference whatever to the Bible. On the contrary, it refers solely to the Qur'án, and to the abrogation of certain Qur'ánic precepts by later ones. Thus in the *Tafsíru'l-Jalálain* we read,

قالوا اي الكفار للنبي صلي الله عليه و سلم انما انت مفتر
كذاب تقوله من عندك بل اكثرهم لا يعلمون حقيقة القران
و فائدة النسخ

'They, that is the infidels, said to the Prophet, on whom be the peace and blessing of God, "Thou art only a forger, thou speakest (these things) from thyself." But most of them do not know the truth of the Qur'án and the benefit of abrogation.' It is clear from these words of the Jalálain that the Qur'ánic abrogation of one command by another called forth the derisive taunts of the unbelievers that the Prophet himself was the author of the new legislation.

Both in the *Tafsíru'l-Qádari* (vol. ii, p. 581) and the *Tafsír Madá'ihi'l-Qur'án* (p. 280) exactly the same explanation is given. The famous exegete Qáḍi Baiḍáwí is even more explicit in his comment upon the passage. He writes as follows:

قالوا اي الكفار انما انت مفتر متقول على الله تأمر بشيء ثم
يبدولك فتنهي عنه

'They, that is the infidels, said, "Thou art only a forger, ascribing thy words to God. Thou commandest something, and afterwards forbiddest it."' Qáḍi Baiḍáwí here makes it perfectly clear that the passage refers to the commands of the Qur'án, and has nothing whatever to do with the Taurát and Injíl.

Another passage often quoted to prove the abrogation of the Bible is the 100th verse of Súratu'l-Baqara. It runs as follows: 'Whatever verse we may annul or cause to forget, we will bring a better or its like.' This verse, like the one previously examined, has reference to the Qur'án and not to the Bible. A few quotations from the standard commentaries of the Qur'án will make this clear.

In the *Tafsíru'l-Jalálain*, for example, we read,

ولما طعن الكفار في النسخ وقالوا ان محمداً يامر اصحابه اليوم بامر وينهي عنه غداً فنزل ما ننسخ

'And when the unbelievers taunted (Muḥammad) concerning abrogation, and said, "Verily Muḥammad commands his companions a certain thing to-day and forbids it to-morrow," then came down the words, Whatever verse we may annul.' With regard to the words, 'Cause thee to forget,' the same commentators say,

اي ننسكها ونمحيها من قلبك

'That is, will cause thee (O, Muḥammad) to forget it, and will blot it out of thy heart.' From these words of the Jalálain it is clear that the words of the passage under discussion refer, not to the Taurát or Injíl, but to the words of Muḥammad himself. God would abrogate, and, in certain cases, cause Muḥammad to forget, what had previously been revealed to him. The whole matter, as explained by the Jalálain, is perfectly easy of comprehension. Muḥammad frequently had reason to reverse certain commands and prohibitions which he had laid upon his followers with regard to *Jihád*, the *Qibla* and so on. These changes called down upon him the ridicule of the unbelievers in the words quoted by the Jalálain. In reply it is stated that God would bring a better

verse than the one abrogated. This is the unanimous view of Muslim exegetes, as will be seen from the quotations given below.

Qáḍi Baiḍáwí [1] comments thus,

نزلت لما قال المشركون او اليهود الا ترون الي محمد يأمر أصحابه بامر ثم ينهاهم عنه و يأمر بخلافه

'(This verse) came down when the polytheists or the Jews said, "Do ye not see Muḥammad, he commands a certain thing to his followers, and afterwards forbids them it, and commands the very opposite."

In the *Tafsiru'l-Qádari*, p. 26, it is said that the passage means,

جو کچھ منسوخ کردیا ہم نے آیات قرآن سے لاتے ہیں ہم بہتر اوس منسوخ کي ہوي آیت سے جیسے دس کافرون کے ساتھہ ایک غازي کا مقابلہ منسوخ کردیا اور دو کافرون کے ساتھہ مقرر کیا اور جیسے قبلہ کو بیت المقدس سے کعبہ کي طرف پھیر دیا

'Whatever verse we abrogate from the Qur'án, we will bring a better than such abrogated verse, as, for example, the command for one Muslim warrior to fight ten infidels was abrogated, and the command given for one Muslim warrior to fight (only) two infidels; and as, for example, the changing of the Qibla from Jerusalem to the Ka'aba (at Mecca).'

[1] *Tafsir*, p. 22.

In the *Tafsíru'r-Raufi*, p. 114, it is said that the words mean,

جو کچھ موقوف کرتے ہین ہم آیتون سے قرآن شریف کے

'Whatever we abrogate of the verses of the noble Qur'án.'

The Urdu commentator of the Qur'án, 'Abdu'l-Qádir, writes thus: [1]

جو موقوف کرتے ہین ہم کوئي آیت قرآن کي موافق مصلحت وقت کے یا بُھلا دیتے ہین اُس آیت کو دلون سے تو لاتے ہین ہم یعنے بھیج دیتے ہین ہم اس سے اچھي جیسے کہ لڑائي مین اول حکم تھا کہ دس کافرون سے ایک مسلمان لڑے پھر حکم ہوا کہ دو کافرون سے ایک مسلمان لڑے یہ آساني ہوئي مسلمانون پر برابر اسکے آیت بھیجتے ہین جیسے کہ پہلے حکم تھا کہ بیت المقدس کي طرف سجدہ کرو پھر مکے کي طرف نماز کا حکم ہوا

'Whatever verse of the Qur'án we abrogate according to the exigencies of the time or cause to forget from the heart, then we will bring, that is send, a better than it; as, for instance, at first in war the command was that one Muslim should fight ten infidels, afterwards the command was given that one Muslim should (only) fight two infidels, which was easier for the Muslims. "We send a verse equal to it" may be instanced by the command which at first existed to bow towards the holy temple at Jerusalem, whereas the command was afterwards given to say the prayers in the direction of Mecca.'

[1] *Tafsir*, p. 17.

From the comments of the great Muḥammadan scholars quoted above it is clear that the verse under discussion refers explicitly and solely to the Qur'án. It has no reference whatever to the Bible. There is no passage anywhere in the whole Qur'án which teaches that the Bible has been abrogated by the Qur'án; but Muslim scholars state that no less than 225 different passages of the Qur'án have been abrogated by later passages of that book. Yet Muslims still continue to read the whole Qur'án, including these abrogated portions; hence, even if it could be shown that the commands of the Bible had been abrogated, that would be no excuse for Muslim neglect to read that Book, which is admittedly a divine revelation. It would still remain an historical record of unique value and importance.

Before we leave this subject it might be well to call the reader's attention to one other passage of the Qur'án in which the subject of abrogation is mentioned.[1] It reads as follows: 'We have not sent any apostle or prophet before thee, but when he recited, Satan injected some desire; but God shall abrogate that which Satan had suggested.' In this passage abrogation is said to take effect on those portions of Scripture which were of Satanic origin, and in illustration of the passage, the Muslim commentators tell a strange story of Muḥammad being deceived by Satan into uttering blasphemy, for which he afterwards grieved sorely until consoled by God by the revelation of this verse. We give below the comment[2] of the famous exegete, Qáḍí Baiḍáwí: 'It is said that he (Muḥammad) wished that, in order to win the faith of his people, there would descend upon him some verse which would establish friendship between him and them; and he continued to do so until, when he was present in a

[1] Súratu'l-Ḥajj (xxii) 51. [2] *Tafsíru'l-Baiḍáwí*, p. 447.

meeting of the idolators, there came down upon him Súratu'n Najm, and he began to recite it. And when he arrived at the words "*Manat* the third besides," Satan whispered to him and placed upon his lips, and he said, "These (Arabian goddesses) are the exalted swans, and verily their intercession is to be hoped for." Then the infidels rejoiced thereat, and when he bowed in worship they joined in his prostrations at the end of the recital, so much so that there remained in the *Masjid* not a believer or an idolator who did not prostrate. Afterwards Gabriel admonished him, at which he became sorrowful, and then God comforted him with this verse.' This extraordinary story, which is related in many Muslim books, makes it plain that, in one instance at least, the words abrogated were the words of Muḥammad uttered under the instigation of Satan!

This completes the list of passages in the Qur'án in which the subject of abrogation is mentioned, and we leave the impartial reader to judge as to how far they prove the abrogation of the Bible. Far from abrogating the Taurát and Injíl, Muḥammad repeatedly described the Qur'án as

مصدقا لما بين يديه

'confirmatory of what was before it.' It is obvious, however, that the Qur'án cannot both confirm and abrogate the Bible, and, seeing that Muḥammadt aught the Jews and Christians of his day the duty of obeying their Scriptures, it is not difficult to see which of the two words represents the real teaching of the Qur'án. The matter is so clear that many candid Muslims freely admit that the Bible has not been abrogated. Thus, commenting on the words, 'If they observe the Taurát and Injíl and what hath been sent down to them from their Lord, they shall surely have their fill of

good things from above them and from beneath their feet.'[1] Muḥammad 'Abdu'l-Ḥakim Khán says[2]:—'Then how absurd is the opinion expressed so often by Muḥammadans, and on their authority by Christians, that the Holy Qur'án abrogates the preceding Scriptures. Nowhere does the Holy Qur'án contain a single word that may express the abrogation of the Pentateuch or of the Gospel or of other Scriptures; but it repeatedly claims to be a confirmation of their teachings. Abrogation it affirms of devilish inspiration only.' The founder of Aligarh College, the late Sir Syed Aḥmad Khán, says:[3] 'Those who imagine it to be a part of the Muḥammadan creed that one law has totally repealed another are utterly mistaken; and we do not believe that the Zabúr (Book of Psalms) abrogated the Taurát (Pentateuch), that the Zabúr in turn gave way to the Injíl (New Testament), and that the New Testament was suppressed by the Holy Qur'án. We hold no such doctrine, and if any ignorant Muḥammadan should assert to the contrary, he simply knows nothing whatever about the doctrines and articles of his faith.'

There is one other aspect of this matter which may be referred to before we bring this chapter to a close. It is this: abrogation can never apply to facts. A command may conceivably be abrogated, but a fact of history is always a fact. What is true to-day, cannot be false to-morrow. The great Muslim scholar Jalálu'd-dín-Syúṭi acknowledges this where he says[4]:

لا يقع النسخ الا في الامر والنهي

'Abrogation can only take place in relation to commands and prohibitions.' Mazhari says the same:

[1] Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 70.
[2] *Tafsir* p. 213.
[3] *Commentary of the Holy Bible*, p 268.
[4] *Itqán*, p. 22.

النسخ انما يعترض على الاوامر والنواهي دون الاخبار

'Abrogation only happens in connection with commands and prohibitions—never with facts.' If, therefore, the Injíl states explicitly, as it does, that the Lord Jesus Christ offered His life upon the cross as an atonement for sin, and rose alive again on the third day; then such an historical fact can never be abrogated. It will always be true that Jesus died and rose again.

We have seen that the Qur'án contains no hint that the Bible has been abrogated. The latter Scripture is still more explicit, and states in unequivocal language that the Gospel dispensation will continue till the end of time. Thus we read 'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever.'[1] Again the Messiah Himself says, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.'[2] Further it is stated in the Injíl concerning the kingdom which Christ came to establish upon earth that 'of his kingdom there shall be no end' (Luke i. 33). How then could the Christian dispensation be abrogated by the coming of Islám? Such an idea is contrary to the teaching of both the Qur'án and the Bible.

[1] Isaiah xl. 8. [2] Matthew xxiv. 35.

CHAPTER VI

BIBLE DOCTRINE IN ISLÁM

IN the previous chapters we have established the fact that the Christian Scriptures have been neither corrupted nor abrogated. They are still, to-day, as they were in the time of Muḥammad, 'guidance and light,' 'complete as to whatever is excellent, and an explanation of every question, and a direction and a mercy.' They are still 'an admonition to the pious,' and, as such, will be read and followed by all who seek the highest good. How far, we now proceed to enquire, do the teachings of the Bible find confirmation and corroboration in Islám? To what extent does a study of the Qur'án support its repeated claim to 'confirm' the preceding Scriptures?

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF GOD

The Bible teaches that there is one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. So far Islám may be said to be in complete agreement. It is when we come to consider the *mode* of the divine existence that the first apparent cleavage in doctrine takes place. The Bible reveals this one and only God as manifested in a trinity of personal existences of one substance, power and eternity: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus the eternal nature of God is seen to have relation within itself. There three eternally harmonious wills are seen to co-exist in mutual love and unity, so that within

the unity of the Godhead there exists a trinity of persons, somewhat as in the unity of human personality there exists a trinity of mind, soul and spirit. Yet as the human personality is one, not three, so in Christian theology this triune God is uniquely and absolutely one. This great mystery of the Holy Trinity is a revealed truth, contained in that Bible of which Muḥammad spoke so highly, and which he taught men to reverence and follow; it is, therefore, of the utmost importance to ask, What was Muḥammad's attitude towards this fundamental truth of Christianity? what has Islám to say concerning this triune expression of the Divine nature? Before answering this question, however, let us once more iterate and emphasise that the question is not whether God is one or three. The Bible, equally with the Qur'án, insists upon the unity of God. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God' is the foundation truth upon which the Biblical doctrine of God is based. The question with which we are now concerned is the mode of the Divine existence, the expression of the Divine nature.

Now when we turn to the Qur'án and the Traditions for an answer to the question as to what was Muḥammad's attitude towards this revealed truth of a triune nature within the unity of the Godhead, we find no reference whatever to the doctrine as held by the Christian Church. Instead we find a laboured attempt to refute a supposed doctrine of three Gods. This is again and again adverted to in the Qur'án in such a way as to make it clear, not that Muḥammad was combating the heretical followers of Marcion (supposing there were any such in Arabia at that time) who said there were three Gods: the God of Justice, the God of Mercy, and the God of Evil, but that he (Muḥammad) entertained the mistaken notion that the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity involved a doctrine of three Gods. This view is strengthened by the terms in which Muḥammad alludes to

this supposed Trinity. Thus we find him saying, 'They surely are infidels who say "God is the third of three"; for there is no God but one God.'[1] And again, 'And when God shall say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, hast thou said unto mankind, take me and my mother as two Gods besides God"?'[2]

Muḥammad is here involved in a double error. First, in thinking that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity involves a recognition of three Gods; and secondly, in imagining that that Trinity consisted of Father, Son and the Virgin Mary. Nor was Muḥammad alone in this misconception of Christian truth, for we find the great Muslim commentators of the Qur'án, the Jalálain, giving expression to similar views. Thus in commenting on the passage quoted above they say,

ان الله ثالث ثلثة هو احدها والاخران عيسي و امه

'Verily God is the third of three. He is one of them, the other two consisting of Jesus and his mother.'

We need scarcely point out that no Christian sect has ever held such a monstrous doctrine. Controversies there have been concerning the nature of God, but the fundamental truth of the unity of God has always been held by orthodox Christians in all ages and in all countries. We now put it to the Muslim reader as to whether a Qur'án which errs so egregiously on a simple matter of fact concerning Christian belief is worthy of acceptance as a guide in those deeper matters affecting our eternal welfare. If Muḥammad was unaware of the true nature of the Christian doctrine of God, what value can we put on his other utterances when he attempts to point out the way to God?

It has sometimes been ignorantly contended that the doctrine of the Trinity is an after-thought: that it finds no place

[1] Súratu'l-Má'ida (v) 76. [2] *Ibid.*, 119.

in the earliest Christian conception of God. But no one can read the New Testament with attention without seeing that everywhere, side by side with an iterated insistence upon the essential unity of God, there is at least an equal insistence upon the Deity of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit. The great command of Jesus Himself to preach the Gospel in all the world was accompanied by explicit instructions to baptize the new converts 'into the name (not names) of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' The doxologies appended to some of the letters of the Apostle Paul point in the same direction, when he craves for his converts in the same breath 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.' Then, again, the ancient liturgies of the Christian Church afford conclusive proof that the doctrine of a triune nature within the Godhead was an integral part of early Christian faith. Thus an ancient liturgy of the Church of Alexandria, adopted about the year A.D. 200 teaches the people to respond, 'One alone is holy: the Father, One alone is holy: the Son, One alone is holy: the Spirit.' It is recorded that when the venerable Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who was born in A.D. 69 and was himself a disciple of the Apostle John, gave his life for the faith, he closed his prayer at the stake in these words: 'For this and for all things I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, together with the eternal and heavenly Jesus, Thy beloved Son, with Whom to Thee and the Holy Ghost be glory both now and to all succeeding ages, Amen.' There is also striking testimony to the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity was held by the early Christian Church in the writings of the famous author and satirist Lucian, who was born in the year A.D. 125. In his *Philopatris* the Christian is made to confess 'The exalted God . . . Son of the Father, Spirit proceeding from the Father, One of three, and three of One.' These quotations suffice to show that from the very

days of Christ Himself the Christian Church held the doctrine of One God in three Persons. Far from it being at development of later ages, it finds its foundation in the Scriptures themselves.

It is merely begging the question for Muslims to say they do not understand the Trinity, and therefore cannot believe it. 'Who can understand the mystery of the resurrection at the last day?' Yet multitudes believe it. There are many things in the Qur'án which Muslims do not understand, but which, nevertheless, they accept on the sole testimony of that book. Thus, commenting on the verse of the Qur'án which refers to God's sitting on the throne, the *Tafsíru'r-Raufi* says, the verse is,

متشابهات قراني سے ايمان ہمارا ھے اسپر اور حقيقت اوسکي
الله ہي جانتا ھے جيسا وہ بے کيف ھے ويسا ہي استوا اس کا
عرش پر بلا کيف ھے

'One of the Mutashábihat, or hidden passages of the Qur'án. We believe it, but only God knows its reality. As He is unknowable, so His sitting on the throne is beyond comprehension.'

Christians humbly accept the mystery of the Trinity on the sole authority of Holy Scripture. They realize that the finite can never fully comprehend the infinite; for to understand God would be to be God. Muslims would be wise to adopt the same attitude. They already believe in the resurrection and future judgment on the sole authority of what they believe to be revelation; then why not accept the testimony of God's Holy Word with respect to His Person.[1]

[1] See further in *Christ in Islám*, p. 16 *et seq.* and *God in Islám*, p. 3 *et seq.*

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting from the Father, very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father. This Word took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin (Mary) of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, Who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but for all actual sins of men. The Bible further teaches that this Christ rose from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for those who put their trust in Him.

The Bible reveals the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. This great doctrine, like that of the Blessed Trinity, is entirely a revealed truth of Holy Scripture. The sonship therein spoken of is a spiritual and eternal relationship between the first and second persons of the Trinity. Christ was always the Son, loved of the Father before the foundation of the world. He did not become the Son in time; He is necessarily and eternally the Son. The term thus defined connotes Deity, and the Holy Bible is full of passages directly or indirectly teaching this great truth. When Christians, therefore, speak of Jesus as the Son of God they do so on the express authority of those Scriptures of which Muḥammad spoke so highly. Thus, at His baptism, we read, a voice was heard from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'[1] Long after, when Jesus was put upon

[1] Matthew iii. 17.

his oath in the court of the Jewish high priest, the latter asked Him saying, 'Art thou the Christ, the son of the Blessed?' And Jesus answered and said, 'I am, and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.'[1] It was, indeed, the constant complaint of His enemies the Jews that 'He said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.'[2] One of the prayers of Jesus recorded in the Injíl contains a clear reference to His pre-existence, in these words, 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.'[3]

How far, we now proceed to ask, does the Qur'án 'confirm' this view of the Messiah's person? What has Muḥammad to say concerning the Divine sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed to us in the Injíl? A study of the Qur'án reveals the fact that Muḥammad knows nothing whatever about it. What he does do, again and again, in the pages of the Qur'án, is to combat an imaginary doctrine of physical sonship involving gross ideas of a carnal generation, such as was never held or taught by Christians at any period of the Church's history. For Muḥammad, the sonship of Christ involved a grossly physical view of His relation to God the Father, carrying with it the blasphemous suggestion of carnal intercourse. Thus we find him saying, 'In ignorance they have ascribed to Him sons and daughters. Glory be to Him! and high let Him be exalted above that which they attribute to Him. Sole Maker of the heavens and of the earth, how, when He hath no consort, should He have a son?'[4]

The reader will scarcely need to be reminded how very far this grotesque view of the sonship of Christ is removed from

[1] Mark xiv. 61–2.
[2] John v. 18.
[3] *Ibid.* xvii. 5.
[4] Súratu'l-An'ám (vi) 100-1.

the spiritual doctrine revealed in the Bible and briefly expounded above. This idea of a carnal sonship is as repellant to the Christian as the Muslim, and it has no place, and never has had a place, in Christian theology. It was Muḥammad's misfortune that he never had expounded to him the orthodox doctrine of the sonship of Christ. The heathen Arabs attributed daughters to God; and when Muḥammad heard the title 'Son' given to the Messiah, he seems to have assumed that that sonship was equally carnal with the relationships posited by the idolatrous Arabs between the Supreme and their inferior deities. In face of such a serious error on the part of Muḥammad as to a general matter of fact, how, we ask, is he to be trusted when he undertakes to teach us the fundamentals of religion?

The Doctrine of the Death of Christ

Another basal doctrine of Christianity is that the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross in order to make atonement for the sins of the world. He Himself said, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'[1] Not only is the death of Jesus related in circumstantial detail in the Injíl, but it is also foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures of the Jews. These latter, it is well known, refused to acknowledge Jesus as their promised Messiah; yet their Scriptures clearly prophecy His death. For example, the prophet Isaiah foretold the death of Christ in these startling words, 'He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken; and he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death.'[2] The prophet David, also, wrote of the Messiah, 'The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my

[1] Matthew xx. 28.

[2] Isaiah liii. 8–9.

feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.'[1] This remarkable prophecy was completely fulfilled when Jesus was killed, not by the Jewish method of stoning, but by crucifixion, the method of capital punishment employed by the Romans.

It should be remembered, further, that the life and death of Jesus are part of Roman history, having taken place under a Roman Governor, and having the attestation of historical records. Under these circumstances we are not surprised to find by a reference to the history of those times wonderful corroboration of the Biblical accounts of the death of Christ. For example, the celebrated Roman historian, Tacitus, who was born about A.D. 55, in his history of the Roman Empire from A.D. 14 to 68 speaks of the Christians thus: 'They called them Christians. Christ, from whom the name was given, had been put to death in the reign of Tiberius by the Procurator Pontius Pilate.'[2] Another famous author of those times was the Greek writer, Lucian, who, writing of the Christians, says, 'They, in sooth, still worship that great man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced into the world this new religion.' Other non-Christian historians might be quoted, but the testimonies given above are sufficient to show that when the Injíl relates the death of Jesus on the cross, it is relating, not only the fulfilment of prophecy, but a well-established fact of history.

Once again, we ask, what has Islám to say with regard to this great central truth of Christianity? How does Muḥammad refer to it in the pages of the Qur'án? As is well known to all students of the Qur'án, that book, instead of 'confirming' the testimony of the Bible with regard to the death of Christ, asserts that He did not die, but was taken up alive to heaven.

[1] Psalm xxii. 16–18. [2] Annals xv. 44.

The words of the Qur'án are these, 'For their saying, "Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, an apostle of God." Yet they slew him not, and they crucified him not, but they had only his likeness.'[1] We have here, surely, a touch-stone with which to test the value of the Qur'ánic testimony. On the one side we find the great prophets who preceded the Messiah prophesying his death, and in the Injíl we have the clear testimony of a number of eye-witnesses, some of whom laid down their lives for their faith. Closely following them we have the valuable, independent testimony of non-Christian historians—all affirming that Jesus was crucified; whilst on the other side we have Muḥammad, who lived several centuries later, denying that Jesus died, and affirming that He was taken up alive into heaven! Surely no unprejudiced reader will have any difficulty in choosing whom to believe.

As we have before remarked, Muḥammad probably never read the Bible himself. It is possible that he had met heretical followers of Mání, who said that Jesus had not died; and he may have thought that their opinions represented the teaching of the Bible. Be that as it may, when the Qur'án is convicted of such hopeless error on a simple matter of historic fact, who will be found willing to risk his eternal salvation by following its teachings concerning the forgiveness of sins? This latter subject we now proceed to briefly discuss.

The Doctrine of the Forgiveness of Sins

The Bible teaches that through the atoning death of Christ, whereby full and complete satisfaction has been made for sin, the guilty, but repentant, sinner may obtain full and unconditional pardon, thereby securing reconciliation with God and acceptance into His heavenly kingdom. The cross is thus

[1] Súratu'n-Nisá' (iv) 158.

seen to be the supreme manifestation of Divine love. God 'gave,' in the language of Scripture, His only-begotten Son, to be 'the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' (1 John ii. 2.) Thus God met the fall with a gift of redemption immeasurably great and wonderful. This gift is available for all who will forsake sin and yield themselves to the sovereignty of Jesus in a spirit of whole-hearted surrender to His will. The Bible pictures God as One Who 'willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,'[1] as 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'[2] The Scriptures represent Him as saying, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.'[3] Thus God is revealed as a loving Father yearning over His erring children, and longing for them to accept His invitation to return to the Father's home. That invitation is extended to all, and 'whosoever will' may 'take the water of life freely.'[4] This, then, is the Divine plan: provision for forgiveness and reconciliation with God, together with an invitation to all to repent and accept the proffered gift in Christ.

Yet there is another and awful alternative, and the Bible speaks in solemn warning of another way which leadeth unto destruction. This, too, is a matter of human choice, for the Bible knows no compulsion to evil. 'Choose ye' is the Divine appointment; and personal responsibility is the key-note in all scriptural delineation of human affairs. Such a scheme is worthy of a God who is Love, for it makes it possible for all men to be saved, and thereby magnifies the infinite mercy and grace of God. It does more: it provides

[1] 1 Timothy ii. 4.
[2] 2 Peter iii. 9.
[3] Ezek. xxxiii. 11.
[4] Revelation xxii. 17.

an incentive to holy living by kindling within the heart of the repentant sinner feelings of gratitude and love.

Now what has Islám to say to such a scheme of redemption? How does Muḥammad treat the question of sin and salvation in the pages of the Qur'án? Does the latter book, does Islám as a system of religion, 'confirm' in this respect the teaching of the preceding Scriptures and offer a salvation full and free to all who will turn from sin to righteousness? For answer we propose to let the Qur'án and Traditions speak for themselves. It will be found, when their testimony is examined, that, instead of a gracious provision for the salvation of all men, Islám speaks of an inexorable fate which condemns multitudes to hell-fire even before their creation. According to the Qur'án, every act of man is necessitated by the express decree of God, and man treads his predestined path—whether for heaven or hell—robbed and cheated of that joyous hope of salvation which is the heritage of every Christian. That this is not a distorted view of the teaching of Islám we now proceed to show by quotations from both the Qur'án and the Traditions.

The Islámic doctrine of predestination or fate occupies large portions of both the Qur'án and the Traditions, so that it is not difficult to arrive at a just appreciation of its true significance and import. It is usually conceived of as the predestination of all things good and evil by which the acts of men were fore-ordained and written down long before the creation. Thus it is written :—

مَا اَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيْبَةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَ فِي اَنْفُسِكُمْ اِلَّا فِي كِتٰبٍ

مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ نَبْرَاهَا

'No mischance chanceth either on earth or in your own persons, but ere we created them, it was in the book.'[1]

إِنَّ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ... وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌ

'Verily everything have we created by decree; and everything that they do is in the books; every (action), both small and great, is written down.'[2] This is somewhat amplified in the Traditions where Muḥammad teaches that

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللهُ الْقَلَمَ فَقَالَ لَهُ أُكْتُبْ قَالَ مَا أَكْتُبُ قَالَ أُكْتُبِ الْقَدَرَ فَكَتَبَ مَا كَانَ وَمَا هُوَ كَائِنٌ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ

'Verily the first thing which God created was the pen. And He said to it, Write. It said, What shall I write? He said, Write down the divine decrees. So it wrote down all that was and all that will be to eternity.'[3]

This decree of God embraces all the acts of men, good or bad; hence some are led astray, whilst others are guided aright. Man thus ceases to be a free agent, and is, consequently, freed from responsibility; for without freedom of choice there can, obviously, be no responsibility. There is a significant passage which recurs again and again in the pages of the Qur'án, which we ask the Muslim reader to ponder. It runs as follows:—

يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ

'He (God) causeth whom He will to err, and whom He will He guideth.'[4] This leads logically to the further doctrine that

[1] Súratu'l-Ḥadíd (lvii) 22. [2] Súratu'l-Qamar (liv) 52–3.
[3] *Mishkátu'l-Maṣábih, Kitábu'l-Imán.* [4] Súratu'n-Naḥl (xvi) 95.

some are predestined for heaven and others for hell. And so we read,

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ

'Many, moreover, of the Jinn and men have we created for hell.'[1] The reason for this is given in another Qur'ánic passage, where we read,

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدَيٰهَا وَلٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

'Had we pleased, we had certainly given to every soul its guidance. But true shall be the word which hath gone forth from me—I will surely fill hell with Jinn and men together.'[2]

We ask the Muslim reader to compare this terrible picture with the gracious invitations of the Bible. Can it for a moment be believed that both are from that supreme Being whom we call the All-Merciful? Are we to believe that God Himself is the Author of Sin! That the piety of the pious and the infidelity of the wicked are alike ordained by Him! Does the Muslim reader of this little book really believe, can he really believe, that this Islámic doctrine of fate is a revelation from God the All-Merciful? We appeal to every Muslim reader of these lines not to let prejudice blind his eyes. We appeal to him to consider the gracious invitation of Jesus, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

[1] Súratu'l-A'ráf (vii) 180. [2] Súratu's-Sajda (xxxii) 13.

CHAPTER VII

BIBLE HISTORY IN ISLÁM

EVERY reader of the Qur'án knows that it contains lengthy and repeated references to Bible history. A very large amount of space indeed is given in the Qur'án to the stories of the early Patriarchs; whilst Moses, David, Solomon and others are also frequently mentioned. Now if the Qur'án 'confirms,' as it claims to do, the Old and New Testament Scriptures, then it is obvious that Qur'ánic references to the great men mentioned in those books will agree with the accounts found in the Taurát and Injíl. Far from this being the case, however, we shall show that Muḥammad again and again falls into serious error with regard to those whom he mentions. Two principal reasons may be assigned for these mistakes on the part of Muḥammad. In the first place, we have direct evidence from Islámic sources that Muḥammad was in the habit of asking the Jews concerning their Faith, and that, in reply, the crafty sons of Israel often deliberately misled the Prophet by misrepresenting the truth, and by leading him to believe that what they had told him was in reality in their Scriptures. This evidence is furnished by no less an authority than 'Abbás, one of the companions of the Prophet. The Tradition itself is recorded by Muslim, and runs as follows:—

قال ابن عباس فلما سالها النبي صلعم عن شيئ من اهل كتاب
فكتموه اياه و اخبروه بغيره فخرجوا قد اروه ان قد خبروه بما سالهم

'Ibn 'Abbás said that, when the Prophet asked any question of the people of the Book, they suppressed the matter, and,

in place of it, told him something else, and went away letting him think that they had told him what he asked them.' Here, then, we have a sufficient explanation of the fact that many of the Jewish stories repeated in the Qur'án do not agree with the inspired records of the Taurát and Injíl.

Another undoubted reason for the historical errors of the Qur'án is the fact that the Jews of Arabia in the time of Muḥammad had largely superseded the study of the Taurát by that of the Talmud. This latter was a collection of traditional folk-lore and Rabbinical speculation concerning almost every conceivable topic. Apocryphal stories of the ancient Patriarchs and traditional comments and glosses of the ancient Scriptures made up a large portion of the Talmud, which, rather than the Taurát, was the book most studied in the schools and recited on public occasions. Little wonder, then, that Muḥammad, as he listened to its unhistorical legends, should have imagined them to be the very words of Scripture, and so was led to incorporate them in his Qur'án. This is the view of no less a scholar than Sir Amír 'Alí, who admits[1] that Muḥammad 'borrowed from the fleeting fancies of Zoroastrianism, Sabeanism and the Talmudic Jew.' These borrowed 'fancies' no doubt contributed not a little to the many historical errors of the Qur'án. In another place the same Muslim writer, speaking of similar Traditions current amongst the Christians of Arabia in the time of Muḥammad, makes the following significant admission:—'Before the advent of Muḥammad, all these traditions, based on fact though tinged by the colourings of imagination, must have become firmly imbedded in the convictions of the people, and formed essential parts of the folk-lore of the country. Muḥammad, therefore, when promulgating his faith and his laws, found these Traditions

[1] *The Spirit of Islám*, p. 235.

floating among his people; he took them up and adopted them as the lever for raising the Arabs as well as the surrounding nations from the depth of social and moral degradation into which they had fallen.'[1] If, as the Sayyid admits, Muḥammad 'took up' and 'adopted' 'traditions based on fact, though tinged by the colourings of imagination,' is it any wonder that many historical errors as to matters of fact found a place in his teaching!

We do not propose to show here to what extent Muḥammad borrowed from Jewish and Christian tradition,[2] but we intend to confine ourselves to a few illustrations of the historical errors in which the Qur'án abounds. These illustrations could be multiplied almost indefinitely, but limits of space forbid more than the briefest selection.

In the Taurát it was revealed to Moses that our first parents lived in the garden of Eden, whence flowed the rivers Hiddekel (Tigris) and Euphrates. The land of Assyria is also mentioned as being near by. From this it is clear that the garden of Eden was situated upon the earth. But in the Qur'án it is erroneously stated that the garden of Eden was in heaven. Thus we read, 'O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in Paradise, and eat ye whence ye will, but to this tree approach not, lest ye become of the unjust doers.'[3] This was not improbably one of the untruths repeated to Muḥammad when he questioned the Jews as to what was in their Scriptures. It is in keeping with their conduct on another occasion when, being asked by him as to what was the punishment laid down in the Taurát for adultery, they falsely told him it was scourging—instead of death by stoning.

The Qur'án erroneously makes Haman to be the name of

[1] Amír 'Alí, *Life of Muḥammad*, p. 25.

[2] See Goldsack, *The Origins of the Qur'án*, Chaps. ii, iii.

[3] Súratu'l-Anáf (vii) 18.

one of the chief officers (the commentators say Vizier) of Pharaoh. Thus we read, 'and Pharaoh said, "O Haman, build for me a tower that I may reach the avenues, the avenues of the heavens, and may mount to the God of Moses, for I verily deem him a liar".'[1] Now Haman, it is well known, lived several hundred years later than Moses. He was vizier to Ahasuerus, king of Babylon, and is mentioned in the Book of Esther, where we read, 'After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Aagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.'[2] Not only so, but the great Jewish historian Josephus also clearly states that Haman served under Ahasuerus in Babylon, and he gives many details of his life there.[3] Thus the statement of the Qur'án that Haman lived in Egypt in the time of Moses is a gross error.

The passage from the Qur'án quoted above contains a double error, for it ascribes the building of the tower of Babel to Pharaoh, though, in reality, it was begun very many years before the time of Moses. If the reader will turn to the eleventh chapter of Genesis he will see how great a time separated the building of the tower from the Pharaoh of Moses' day. Moreover the real tower was built 'in the Land of Shinar,' i.e. Babylon, and not in Egypt at all.

From the Taurát[4] we learn that the name of Abraham's father was Terah. The great Jewish historian Josephus says the same, for in his book[5] we read of 'Terah, who was the father of Abraham.' There can be no doubt, therefore, that

[1] Súratu'l-Mu'min (xl) 36.
[2] Esther iii. 1.
[3] See Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, p. 283.
[4] Genesis xi. 27.
[5] *The Antiquities of the Jews*, p. 35.

Terah was the correct name; yet, strange to say, the Qur'án erroneously calls him Ázar in these words,

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ آزَرَ

'And when Abraham said to his father Ázar.' No satisfactory explanation of this has ever been given, though later Muslim scholars, who have recognised Muḥammad's mistake, have made various attempts to escape the difficulty. Thus the Jalálain, in commenting on the passage just quoted, say

هو لقبه و اسمه تارخ

'It (i.e., the word Ázar) was his title, and his name was Tárakh.' The commentator Baiḍáwí quotes another opinion to the effect that Abraham's father had two names, Ázar and Tárakh! These are obviously mere subterfuges designed to explain away the Prophet's mistake.

In Súratu'l-Qaṣaṣ (xxviii) 9 we are told that Pharaoh's wife took pity on and brought up the infant child Moses when he was taken out of the river where he had been hidden by his mother. It is there written that 'Pharaoh's wife said, "Joy of the eye to me and thee! put him not to death. Haply he will be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son".' This, however, is another of the mistakes of Muḥammad, for the Taurát makes it clear that it was Pharaoh's daughter, and not his wife, who found the child and adopted him as her son. It is there written, 'The daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maids to fetch it. And when she opened it, she saw the child . . . and the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he

became her son.'[1] The Bible narrative is amply confirmed by the Jewish historian Josephus who writes, 'Thermuthis was the king's daughter. She was now diverting herself by the banks of the river; and seeing a cradle borne along by the current, she sent some that could swim, and bid them bring the cradle to her. . . . Thermuthis, therefore, perceiving him to be so remarkable a child, adopted him for her son.'[2]

In the Bible there is a very vivid story of the great Israelitish leader Gideon, who was instructed by God to choose his men for battle by taking only those who drank the water of the river from their hands, instead of kneeling down to drink.[3] Josephus, likewise, relates the story, and says distinctly that the incident took place in the time of Gideon. The Qur'án, however, erroneously states that the incident took place many years later in the time of Saul! Thus we read, 'And when Saul marched forth with his forces he said, "God will test you by a river. He who drinketh of it shall not be of my band, but he who shall not taste it, drinking a drink out of the hand excepted, shall be of my band".'[4] Now whom, we ask, are we to believe: those inspired men who lived in Palestine and who wrote soon after the event, and had ample opportunity of learning the truth, or Muḥammad, who lived in Arabia more than a thousand years later, and who contradicts not only the Bible, but the testimony of the Jewish historian Josephus?

One of the greatest mistakes of the Qur'án is that of confusing Mary, the mother of Jesus, with Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron. This mistake is found in Súratu Maryam (xix) 27–8, where we read, 'They said, "O Mary, now hast thou done a strange thing! O sister of Aaron, thy

[1] Exodus ii. 3, 10.
[2] *The Antiquities of the Jews*, p. 63.
[3] Judges vii.
[4] Súratu'l-Baqara (ii) 248.

father was not a man of wickedness, nor unchaste thy mother".' In another place in the Qur'án Mary is called the 'Daughter of 'Imrán'. Moses, too, is called by Muḥammad the 'Son of 'Imrán,' so that it is clear the Prophet thought the two Marys were one and the same person. It is well known, however, that Mary, the mother of Jesus, lived many centuries after Moses and Aaron, and that there was nothing in common between the two women except that they both belonged to the same race, and bore the same name. The father of Moses and Aaron and Miriam (Mary) was, we learn from the Bible, Amram, thus affording still further proof, if such were needed, that Muḥammad imagined *that* Mary to be the mother of Jesus.

One more illustration must suffice before bringing this chapter to a close. It is found in Súratu Bani Isrá'íl, verse i, where we read, 'Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the sacred temple (of Mecca) to the temple that is more remote.' The commentators agree that by the 'temple that is more remote' is meant the holy temple at Jerusalem, and Muḥammad himself has left, in the traditions, most circumstantial and detailed accounts of this supposed journey. In one of them, preserved in the *Mishkát*, he says that

فركبته حتي اتيت بيت المقدس فربطته بالحلقة التي تربط بها الانبياء قال ثم دخلت المسجد فصليت فيه ركتين

'Therefore I rode him (the beast Buráq) until I came to the Holy House (i.e. the temple at Jerusalem). Then I tied him to the ring to which the prophets were wont to tie (their steeds).' He said, 'After that I entered the temple and prayed in it two rakats.' Unfortunately for the truth of this story, the famous Jewish Temple at Jerusalem was totally

[1] Mishkátu'l-Maṣábih, Bábu'l-Adáb.

destroyed by the Romans some centuries before the birth of Muḥammad, *and was never rebuilt.* The story quoted above, therefore, together with the Qur'ánic reference to it, is totally false. This is not a matter of opinion or of exegesis: it is a simple matter of fact which any intelligent Muslim can verify for himself, and it conclusively shows how little dependence can be placed on the words of the Qur'án.

We have not touched on the question of the Bible in the Traditions; the reason being that that aspect of the subject has already been fully dealt with.[1]

We now bring this brief study of the place of the Bible in Islám to a close. We have seen that Muḥammad consistently held the Bible to be the uncorrupted word of God, and a 'Light' and 'Guidance' for men. He taught the Jews and Christians to 'observe' it, thus demonstrating that it had not been abrogated. We have further seen that Muḥammad, whose knowledge of the contents of the Bible was gained from hearsay, held many erroneous views both as to its doctrines and history. Had he come into contact with true Christianity, and not been influenced by the false teaching of heretical Christian sects, he would probably have been a Christian.

In conclusion, we would urge the reader to study the Bible for himself. He will find it to be indeed a 'light' on all the difficulties and problems of life, and 'guidance' from this world to that which is to come.

[1] See Goldsack, *The Traditions in Islám*, Chapter IV.

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